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ABSTRACT

A study investigated beliefs about language learning held by two groups of students studying Arabic: 41 students in conventional classroom language instruction at the University of Wisconsin in 1992 and 1993, and 27 in an immersion program at the Yemen Language Center (Yemen). The survey instrument consisted of 47 statements in a Likert-type scale and 5 demographic items. Comparison of the two groups revealed both similarities and differences in beliefs about respondents' own language ability, language ability in general, language learning processes, and the value and utility of language learning. It is noted that the two groups were not heterogeneous; there were differences in age, levels of language instruction, and program design. The findings are seen as support for foreign language learning. Teachers and students are encouraged to identify, organize, and exploit positive beliefs and to use knowledge of beliefs to modify course content, lesson sequence, selection of teaching methods and materials, and articulation across levels of instruction, and to create a mode of instruction satisfying student needs and goals. Contains 50 references. The questionnaire is appended. (MSE)

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STATESIDE AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS OF ARABIC: BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

Patricia S. Kuntz

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Abstract

This paper investigates the beliefs about language learning held by students enrolled in Arabic. Based in part upon the research design and instrument of Elaine Horwitz (University of Texas-Austin), this paper reports the results from a sample of students at the University of Wisconsin and at the Yemen Language Center. This research identifies the most strongly rated beliefs of students and the significant different beliefs for students at studying in the United States and Yemen. Findings of this study provide strong evidence that, in the case of this sample, students of Arabic in Yemen (an immersion program) do hold beliefs concerning foreign language learning different from those of students in the United States (a classroom program). A result that suggests an important influence of immersion programs with intensive instruction upon beliefs about foreign language learning.

STATESIDE AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS OF ARABIC: BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

Recent research (Freed, 1995; Jorden, 1992) reports mixed results for students who enroll in overseas language programs. Some students appear to acquire language faster from studying abroad than for equal time studying in the United States.[1] However, evidence from other U.S. research on students' overseas studies has shown that in-country study is not necessarily beneficial or even better than study in the United States (Ferguson & Huebner, 1989; Frye & Garza, 1993; Hill, 1986; Milleret, 1990; Wilkinson, 1995).[2] Frequently, overseas students live with other English-speakers in dorms or apartments and thus may not benefit from the intended language immersion. Scholars (Brecht et al., 1993; Day, 1987) suggest that overseas study may be preferable to U.S. instruction (class only) for advanced students, particularly in the case of students of the less commonly taught languages (LCTL).

This research examines beliefs held by students of Arabic who study in the United States at a federally-funded research university and by students who study Arabic overseas at a private language institution. It identifies certain priorities in their beliefs, describes effects that such beliefs may have on language learning, and suggests beliefs that promote language proficiency.

The study sampled students enrolled at the University of Wisconsin (Wisconsin) in Madison and those enrolled at the Yemen Language Center (YLC) in Sana'a, Yemen. The *Kuntz-Rifkin Instrument* (KRI) utilized in this survey is expanded from

Horwitz's (1988) *Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory* (Appendix B - Survey). The research questions are:

1. What are the strongly rated statements about language learning for students of Arabic in the United States and Yemen?

2. Are there significant differences in statement responses of students of Arabic who are studying in the United States and Yemen?

This article describes belief theory, summarizes the instructional situation for each sample, outlines the method of research, discusses the results, and ends with implications.

Beliefs and Literature Review

The concept of belief emerges from a body of literature that goes back two decades. For the most part, this literature presents students' views about language learning at the post-secondary level. In this case, "beliefs" are defined in this study as notions about language learning that students have acquired before receiving classroom instruction. Such beliefs reflect confidence in students' ability to learn a language and the procedures necessary to acquire fluency in a language.

Language learning belief research. In the past, foreign language researchers (Campbell et al., 1993; Horwitz, 1988; Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995; Tumposky, 1991; Yang, 1992) identified beliefs about language learning held by students of commonly taught languages (English, French, German, and Spanish). Their results suggest that such assumed beliefs may be erroneous or even detrimental to learning (Horwitz, 1988). However, in the previous studies, these researchers did not examine the

significantly different responses for statements as reported by students studying the language in a non-immersion (stateside) and immersion setting (overseas). Therefore, identifying student beliefs may enable teachers to devise learning strategies that support or correct beliefs, improve student proficiency, and redesign programs.

Textbooks. Such understanding of student beliefs is important for authors, teachers and textbook content. Often textbook authors make curriculum decisions on the assumption that they and students (stateside ones) share the same beliefs about foreign language learning. The most popular elementary Arabic textbook, produced in 1968 (revised 1975), follows the audio-lingual method. This method tended to discourage spontaneous speaking--the skill that most U.S. students seek (Belnap, 1987). The textbook author's preconceptions may inhibit teachers' receptivity to beliefs of students (Lutz, 1990; Yorio, 1986). With only a textbook as a guide, the instructors (novice and experienced) are likely to teach directly from the text. The cultural inclusiveness of textbooks often reflects the experience of the author for a stateside class (Wilkinson, 1995). In other words, ironically, although students are the targeted purchasers of textbooks, they are probably the least understood component in the design of language programs (Heilenman, 1991). Research on student beliefs might enable authors and instructors to design more student-friendly materials.

University of Wisconsin. The *National Defense Education*

Act (NDEA) and later the *Higher Education Act* (HEA) have been the primary means to increase the national language capacity for government employment (Bordie, 1960; Clowse, 1981; Thompson, 1970). Beginning with the mid-1960s, the U.S. Congress has maintained funding for Wisconsin among other universities to conduct basic research on and to provide instruction in Arabic. The Department of African Languages and Literature offered three levels of instruction and comprises a faculty member and a teaching assistant (TA) who teach about 40 students. However, language teaching is neither a professor's or TAs primary duty nor usually a component of faculty tenure and promotion, so instructors of Arabic rarely comply with these funding requirements or conduct research on language acquisition (Lambert, 1984; Walsh, 1989).

Administrators (Hayward, 1983; Wiley & Dwyer, 1980) have recognized that their programs produced area specialists with ancillary language training and that these specialists "continued to lack either the will or the means to use these skills efficiently in the service of national goals" (Perkins, 1979 p. 139). Moreover, the language policy of the HEA that funds graduate and post-graduate studies rarely seem to benefit undergraduate or pre-collegiate students.[3] In addition, a survey of available teaching materials reveals that those materials at most funded universities seem to pre-date research findings on student beliefs and their impact on language learning.[4] Consequently, when undergraduates enroll in Arabic

courses, they often find that the instructional methods and course goals do not address their needs (Appendix C - Enrollments).

Heretofore, Arabic language research has rarely addressed student beliefs (Belnap, 1993 & 1987). Student beliefs about language learning have begun to generate concerns about program design at funded universities (Bay, 1991; Guyer, 1996). A recent dissertation (Orobo-Osagie, 1992) surveyed students concerning their reactions to African program developments. Arabic language instruction was one of the issues raised in the survey. The evaluations from students of their language instruction were not entirely positive. The important issue is not the correctness of these student assertions, but rather the way in which their opinions underscore beliefs that may lead them to question aspects of the language program including overseas study.

Yemen Language Center. The Yemeni Ministry of Education officially authorized the establishment of the YLC in March, 1989. The YLC teaches Modern Standard Arabic and Yemeni Arabic (colloquial) to adults including residents in Yemen and visiting students (Appendix C - Enrollments). There are four terms annually lasting from 10-12 weeks and consisting of nine instructional levels. Typically, instructors teach small classes of three to six students or held tutorials. Students may receive a certificate after completing one course. All the teachers speak Arabic as their first language and hold a B.A. degree. The amount of Arabic-language instruction experience varies. For

instance, some teachers have worked as language trainers for the U.S. Peace Corps while others have inspected precollegiate language programs for the Ministry of Education. Every five weeks, the staff provide a day excursion to a historical site. Students live in YLC hostels where often they speak English.

Method

A survey was designed to identify beliefs. The KRI comprised five demographic statements in addition to 47 statements designed in a Likert 5-scale, closed-ended format. This scale measured the strength of student agreement with each statement. For purposes of data analysis, a student choice was equated to numbers as follows:

(a) strongly agree	=	1
(b) agree	=	2
(c) neutral (neither agree nor disagree)	=	3
(d) disagree	=	4
(e) strongly disagree	=	5

The sample comprised students from the University of Wisconsin (Wisconsin-USA) and from the Yemen Language Center (YLC-Yemen) (Table 1). In 1992 and 1993, teachers of first-semester, first-year Arabic administered the survey during the first week of instruction. In October, 1996, the author administered the survey to students on the first day of classes prior to the placement tests at the YLC. Most students had arrived in Sana'a several days before this program began which enabled them to hear Arabic in context. Study at Wisconsin or the YLC could fulfill the undergraduate language requirement (Appendix A - Class Time).

The demographic data showed some differences (Table 1). For example, students who studied at the YLC tended to be older students with previous Arabic instruction.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics for Students of Arabic at Wisconsin and the Yemen Language Center

Institutions Sample size	1992/93 N=41	WI 92 n=16	WI 93 n=25	YLC 96 N=27
C. Sex (males)	51%	53%	48%	44%
Sex (females)	49%	47%	52%	56%
D. Age (18-22 years)	73%	81%	68%	44%
Age (26+ years)	5%	0	8%	30%
E. Previous study of ARABIC	28%	18%	36%	92%
F. Previous study of any language	93%	94%	88%	92%
G. Mother tongue English	?	?	68%	74%

Statistical analyses comprised descriptive techniques (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) to match the procedures done by other researchers (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Park, 1995; Truitt, 1995; Tumposky, 1991; Yang, 1992). Since this sample size was small, the author planned non-parametric statistics (Kruskal-Wallis) to test the hypothesis about differences in responses between students of Wisconsin and the YLC. The decision point was an $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results

Results from the students of Arabic at Wisconsin and the YLC reveal some differences.

1. *What are the strongly rated statements about language learning for students of Arabic in the United States and Yemen?*

Responses greater than 50% from both institutions yielded polarities within the AGREEMENT and DISAGREEMENT categories.

Table 2 Consensus Responses for Statements from Students of ARABIC

Institutions Sample size	1992/93 N=41	WI 92 n=16	WI 93 n=25	YLC 96 N=27
AGREEMENT				
17-Important to repeat & practice	100%	100%	100%	100%
3-Some FL easier to learn than other	88%	77%	96%	85%
40-Interested in culture of people	86%	82%	83%	96%
11-Better to learn FL in country of FL	85%	82%	88%	100%
23-Knowing FL will bring job opportunities	83%	94%	76%	74%
34-Everyone can learn a FL	83%	77%	88%	68%
25-Learning FL differs from other subjects	81%	88%	76%	85%
46-Plan to travel to country of FL	81%	77%	83%	90%
*4-This FL is difficult to learn	78%	82%	72%	70%
1-Child learn FL better than adults	76%	88%	68%	96%
31-Learning FL to know FL speakers	75%	77%	75%	89%
41-Interested in econ/pol. of country	72%	85%	63%	74%
13-Guessing is OK	71%	88%	56%	85%
39-FL will be helpful professionally	61%	69%	54%	67%
2-Some people born with special FL ability	54%	59%	52%	64%
***				
6-Will learn this FL very well	66%	94%		78%
8-Knowledge of FL culture necessary	54%	65%		64%
27-If speak FL well, will get good job	53%	69%		54%
10-It easier to learn FL2 if learned FL	51%	53%		89%
12-If heard language, would speak it		65%		78%
30-My country's people think FL is important				67%
===				
7-Speak with an excellent accent	59%	59%	56%	
15-I have a FL aptitude	54%	65%		
18-Feel self-conscious speaking FL			60%	
19-Mistakes are hard to rid later			52%	

Institutions	1992/93	WI 92	WI 93	YLC 96
Sample size	N=41	n=16	n=25	N=27
	DISAGREEMENT			
9-Do not speak until correct	95%	100%	92%	100%
26-Learning FL is translating from English	88%	88%	84%	85%
5-FL structured in same way as English	85%	88%	84%	85%
35-To read in FL, must know all words	81%	77%	79%	96%
36-To listen in FL, must know all words	78%	85%	70%	92%
38-Distant ancestors knew this FL	72%	68%	75%	89%
***				
33-My country's people are good learners	53%	69%		56%
20-Learning FL is learning grammar	51%	53%		73%
16-Learning a FL is learning vocabulary	51%		56%	52%
43-FL necessary for fellowship			54%	73%
42-FL requirement for graduation				80%
19-Mistakes are hard to rid later				69%
*47-Most important proficiency goal				60%
29-People good in math/science not in FL				56%
22-Women better FL learners than men				56%
44-Friends and relatives speak the FL				56%
32-People who speak FL are intelligent				52%
===				
30-My country's people think FL is important	67%	77%	58%	
24-Easier to speak than understand	56%	71%		

*4, 14, 47 = specific answers

2. Are there significant differences in statement responses of students of Arabic who are studying in the United States and Yemen?

Results show that significant differences do exist between students studying stateside and those studying overseas. A

comparison of responses from students enrolled at Wisconsin with those enrolled at the YLC reveal differences for 17 statements or 36% of the survey (Table 3).

Table 3 Significant Statements for Arabic (Kruskal-Wallis)

Institution		WI	YLC
Year		1992/3	1996
Sample Size		N=41	N=27
			AGREE
30.	My country's people think FL is important	41.21*	19.72
11.	Better to learn FL in country of FL	40.40	25.54
10.	It easier to learn FL2 if learned FL	39.70	25.02
12.	If heard language, would speak it	39.99	26.17
13.	Guessing is OK	39.49	26.93
16.	Learning a FL is learning vocabulary	38.80	27.96
			DISAGREE
19.	Mistakes are hard to rid later	28.17	43.19
9.	Do not speak until correct	28.29	43.00
45.	The quality of instruction is excellent	25.63	40.50
32.	People who speak FL are intelligent	26.58	39.22
18.	I am nervous speaking the FL	29.40	41.25
35.	To read in FL, must know all words	26.93	38.76
47.	Most important proficiency goal	25.11	37.65
14.	Amount of time necessary to learn FL	29.48	39.02
38.	Distant ancestors knew this FL	28.04	37.28
42.	FL requirement for graduation	27.19	36.48
20.	Learning FL is learning grammar	30.46	39.58

$p < 0.05$
* = .0001 (negative response)

Discussion

This section addresses important statements to which the students responded strongly and the significant differences between the responses from students of the two institutions followed by pedagogical suggestions.

Agreement. Responses from students of Arabic at Wisconsin and the YLC showed that they agreed with 15 statements (Table 2). All these students, like other adult students of the

commonly taught languages (CTL) (Fox, 1993; Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Tumposky, 1991; Yang 1992) and the LCTLs (Kuntz, 1996), reported strongest agreement with (17) "It is important to repeat and practice a lot." These students seem to recognize that "time on task" is critical for learning. In fact, some students may become uncomfortable if their instructor does not create a variety of drills for in-class practice, such as a Gouin series. This response may suggest the need for instructors to use strategies from the audio-lingual method, such as oral repetition, pattern practices, and auditory discrimination.

All the YLC students also responded strongly to (11) "It is better to learn a FL in the foreign country." In previous studies, adult students of the CTLs (Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Tumposky, 1991; Yang, 1992), of the LCTLs (Kuntz, 1996), and TAs of French (Fox, 1993) did not report their highest percentage of agreement for this statement. Since students indicated that they would learn more language abroad, this information may explain why these students may not feel adequately trained even by native-speakers in the United States. Perhaps, to compensate for a dearth of language materials about the target culture stateside, these students recognize that they need to have additional contacts with people and culture in order to better learn Arabic.

Students from the YLC showed a stronger response, in contrast to students from Wisconsin, to (6) "I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well."

However, these students were not as positive as those from Wisconsin concerning future use as evident by (23) "If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it."

Two statements not receiving agreement responses from the students of YLC, in contrast to the Wisconsin, responses were: (7) "It is important to speak a FL with an excellent accent" and (15) "I have a FL aptitude." These YLC students perhaps realized that one often can be understood without having a perfect accent. Moreover, an "excellent" accent for one group of speakers may not be the same as for other native speakers. Colloquial sensitivity particularly for Arabic is critical in communication. Having an overall foreign language aptitude may or may not enhance language learning if the motivation is not present. Furthermore, some students at the YLC may have considered different aspects of language aptitude less important, such as writing or translating.

Finally, a majority of strongly agree responses (greater than 50%) from YLC students showed several additional views (Appendix D - Majority Responses):

40. I am interested in the culture of the people who speak this language;
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a FL; and
46. I plan to travel to a country where this language is spoken.

Strong agreement with these statements may underscore some of the reasons why these students have chosen to study overseas. Immersing oneself in an Arab culture is an important consideration for these students. Because most of these students began their studies as adults, their responses imply that

studying overseas will provide additional practice to off-set the child-adult differential.[5] A statement that focuses on learning ability, such as (1) "It is easier for children than adults to learn a FL," is in line with findings revealed in other studies (Ferguson & Huebner, 1989; Fox, 1993; Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Park, 1995; Tumposky, 1991; Truitt, 1995; Yang, 1992). The findings of current research on language acquisition such as brain development and lateralization are fairly common knowledge. Students in this study may have had some contact with this research (Krashen, 1982).

Disagreement. Responses from these students of Arabic showed common disagreement for six statements (Table 2). The statement yielding the highest percentage of disagreement was (9) "You shouldn't say anything in the FL until you can say it correctly." Students at both institutions appear to recognize that speaking Arabic contains elements of risk; however, it is only by speaking that students will learn the subtleties of oral production. In contrast to the responses from the Wisconsin students, the responses from the YLC students included six additional statements that aroused of strong disagreement:

42. I need to fulfill a FL requirement for graduation;
19. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on;
29. People who are good in math and science are not good at learning FLs;
22. Women are better than men at learning FLs;
44. I have friends and relatives who speak the FL; and
32. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.

In contrast to the growing trend among Wisconsin students to

enroll in Arabic to meet academic requirements, students at the YLC disagreed with the statements (42) "I need to fulfill a FL requirement for graduation" and (43) "[I] qualify for a fellowship or some kind of funding for [my] education." These findings may reflect the demographics of these academic-year overseas student. With the rise in the cost of living and tuition, administrators award very few fellowships regardless of the country of origin. Finally, YLC students, unlike those at Wisconsin, disagreed completely with (29) "People who are good at math and science are not good a learning FLs." This response may be a consequence of the students' majors. YLC students, unlike their peers at Wisconsin, strongly disagreed with (22) "Women are better than men at learning FLs." This response may reflect the political correctness for gender equity and research (Brugel & Buunk, 1996; Campbell & Shaw, 1994; Oxford, Nyikos, & Ehrman, 1988) concerning the sex of successful language learners.

In contrast to overseas students, stateside students may not achieve an advanced level of proficiency in speaking and writing (productive skills). However, they most likely expect to acquire a proficiency in listening and reading (receptive skills) (Alosh, 1992). In this study, Wisconsin students, in contrast to YLC students, disagreed with (24) "It is easier to speak than understand a FL." This response perhaps reveals students' awareness that based on their knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic, they may be able to understand different colloquials of Arabic when they may not be capable of speaking it.

Finally, students from the YLC showed a majority of strongly disagree responses for several additional statements (Appendix D - Majority Responses):

38. I have distant ancestors who spoke this language;
43. I need the FL to qualify for a fellowship or some kind of funding for my education.

Students who studied in Yemen did so for both language and cultural reasons. Few if any were heritage speakers unlike the students of Lebanese, Syrian, Malaysian, and Indonesian heritage enrolled at Wisconsin. Consequently, they had not experienced Arabic culture through family tradition. Many YLC students were studying Arabic as a break in their stateside program or for professional development.

Significant statements. The statistically different responses between students of Wisconsin and those of the YLC may reflect the amount of contact with instructors and other native-speakers of Arabic. Responses to statement (30) "'Americans' (people from my country) think that it is important to speak a foreign language" yielded the greatest statistical difference. Those students who studied overseas exhibited strong country support for foreign language instruction. These students most likely obtained approval from academic advisors, supervisors, and family members for their overseas program.

Finally, YLC students, in contrast to Wisconsin students, agreed more strongly with (13) "It's okay to guess if you don't know a word in the FL." Students who agree with the use of guessing and who are successful at deriving meaning from unknown

words or phrases may believe that guessing is an important language strategy. In overseas situations, students often find that they have to guess meaning as part of their daily activities. Teachers can help students make "educated" guesses. For instance, teachers might encourage students to guess words from the context of the text and then ask them to explain their rational (think-aloud protocol) to help other students understand the cognitive process. Or, teachers might create activities for students to apply morphological and semantic patterns to new situations.

In addition, students from the YLC, unlike students from Wisconsin, indicated strong disagreement concerning error correction as shown by (19) "If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on." The research on error correction is debated among scholars. Perhaps in an immersion setting, students perceive that errors can be more easily corrected since often they are made in a context with specific economic or cultural implications.

Implications

The results from these students of Arabic show common responses which suggest common beliefs. The following 16 statements (34% of survey) may be the ones that administrators and instructors of Arabic could address in collaboration with colleagues.

AGREEMENT

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a FL;
2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a FL;

3. Some languages are easier to learn than others;
4. The language I am trying to learn is a very difficult;
17. It is important to repeat and practice a lot;
23. If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it;
25. Learning FL is different from learning other school subjects;
31. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers;
34. Everyone can learn to speak a FL;
39. It (FL) will be helpful to me professionally;
40. I am interested in culture of the people who speak this language;
41. I am interested in the politics and/or economic systems of the countries where this language is spoken; and
46. I plan to travel to a country where this language is spoken.

DISAGREEMENT

5. The language I am trying to earn is structured in the same way as English;
26. Learn a FL is mostly a matter of translation from English; and
36. In order to listen to something in FL, you have to know all the words.

Agreement statements.

In this study, students agreed with (3) "Some FLs are easier to learn than others" as do students and TAs in other studies (Fox, 1993; Horwitz, 1988; Kern, 1995; Truitt, 1995; Yang, 1992). Research concerning different lengths of acquisition time needed for different groups of languages corroborates this finding.

Since U.S. officials classify Arabic as a "most" difficult language, often trips to countries where Arabic is spoken are designed to add contact time and cultural exposure. If study overseas becomes an integral part of the U.S. language program, teachers will need to include pre-departure orientation into the curricula so that students will be familiar with cultural phenomena and to hold debriefing meetings upon their return.

These students agree with (25) "Learning a FL is different

from learning other school subjects." Students accustomed to class lectures or general discussion may find that oral participation, pair work, daily homework, and weekly quizzes require a different set of learning strategies and self-discipline not used in other academic subjects. In addition, overseas programs typically require four hours of daily classes plus several hours of homework. This schedule can be exhausting.

The common response to (40) "I am interested in the culture of the people who speak this language" reinforces the current focus on integrating culture into daily lessons (Frye & Garza, 1993; Kramsch, 1993). However, Wilkinson (1995) recently found that deep structures of culture are rarely addressed in the United States or overseas as previously recommended (Omaggio, 1986; Rivers, 1981). Issues such as cultural intent of statement, strategies for active listening, contextualized materials, and challenged ethnocentric views appear lacking in U.S. classrooms.

Knowledge of the strength of this student concern is crucial for teachers (Tedick & Walker, 1994), for textbook writers (Amayreh, 1984), and for curriculum developers if they are to meet students' goals and expectations in foreign language study. In addition, an increasing number of U.S.-born students are studying Arabic (al-Batal, 1995; Rouchdy, 1992) in preparation for conversion to Islam as well as those anticipating future language-related employment.

In response to findings in this present study concerning

beliefs about culture, teachers might try to develop student knowledge in using varied learning strategies that include both non-verbal and verbal communication of the target culture (Crookall & Oxford, 1990). More specifically, teachers of Arabic need to focus on Islam as a cultural component of language study. Arabic, as a religious language, is important for Muslims who reside in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Recently, various public and private organizations have offered funding specifically to teachers of Arabic for the development of materials that incorporate multiple types of culture.[7]

Students of Arabic indicate a strong aspiration to travel -- (46) "I plan to travel to a country where this language is spoken." Inter-cultural benefits rarely can be generated by short contacts for novice learners. Complex abstract ideas that are necessary for conversation are difficult for students with less than an advanced level proficiency to discuss with native-speakers (Wilkinson, 1995). To profit from their beliefs in the values of overseas studies, students need to know how to interpret appropriately what they experience and how to interact with experiences that are important and relevant to the culture.

Disagreement statements. Students disagree with statement (26) "Learning a FL is mostly a matter of translating from English." In the case of Arabic, the various diglossia confound the process of translation (Abachi, 1988; Badawi, 1985; Omran, 1983). Consequently, teachers may need to include a wide variety of written and oral activities in the target language for

these students as opposed to translation work. Students might create language ladders to illustrate degrees of meaning for a concept.

Finally, the responses from these students do not appear to indicate a frustration in not knowing all vocabulary--(36) "In order to listen to something in a FL, one must know all the words." Recently, teachers have developed strategies to help students learn how to listen for different purposes.

Current language acquisition research corroborate most of these findings. By collaborating with scholars and publishers of the Arabic concerning curriculum and instructional strategies that address these statements, instructors of Arabic may reduce the amount of time necessary to create lessons, develop programs, and train teachers. Since most institutions offer pre-employment workshops for instructors, some of these common beliefs can be addressed in this forum. Moreover, instructors may consider designing action research with their counterparts of Arabic to test variations in materials or learning strategies with students.

Limitations

Several limitations in this study need mentioning. First, since the students were at different levels of language instruction, the sample was not homogenous. Second, the sample size was small which underscores the difficulty of conducting quantitative research concerning students of Arabic. Third, the data were not collected at the same time.

In the future, the teachers of Arabic might design studies to compare responses from students at subsequent levels of instruction. A cohort study would be appropriate to determine the change or modification in beliefs made by students during their entire language program. In addition, a survey of the instructors and administrators would enable scholars to ascertain if there are mismatches in beliefs between these educators and their respective students.

Conclusions

In general, these results may be seen as support for many foreign language recommendations or requirements which specify that every student should study and be exposed to a foreign language for at least two years of instruction (Freed, 1990). With this sample of students of Arabic, this study demonstrates that differences do exist in beliefs between students who study stateside in classroom setting and overseas in immersion settings. Both teachers and students must identify, organize, and exploit the positive beliefs held by students about learning a language. Such knowledge may help to determine or modify course content, lesson sequence, teaching methods and materials, and even articulation across levels of instruction. In addition, this knowledge of student beliefs makes it possible for teachers to create a mode of instruction in which students' needs and goals are satisfied. Arabic acquisition may now be understood in terms of the beliefs that students have about their lessons, their control over the curriculum, their sense of progress in

Arabic, their understanding for cultural meanings. With a joint effort by students, teachers, authors, and administrators of language programs around the world can improve teaching effectiveness so that students of Arabic can attain an advanced level of understanding and proficiency and become lifelong Arabic speakers.

Notes

1. In support of pre-collegiate overseas language study see: Grittner, F.M. (1979?) *Evaluation of the German-American Partnership Program between Madison public school and Neutorschule of Mainz*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Mayer, K. & Schäfer, G. (1983?). *Understanding for alien cultures and mentalities: Results of a study of the efficiency of study abroad* (manuscript in translation). Mollica, A. (1985). Student exchanges: Getting to know one another. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 41/4 (March): 697-708.

2. The Research Perspectives in Adult Language Learning and Acquisition '95 held a meeting to discuss "Study Abroad: Research on Learning Language and Culture in Context" (10-11 November 1995 at Ohio State University).

3. In 1979, James Ruchti (U.S. Department of State) stated that only one in six African specialists (NDEA/HEA graduates) obtained employment in government agencies (Perkins, 1979, p. 190).

4. The Center for Applied Linguistics, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, has compiled a list of research, conference, and material grants awarded for the study of 120 LCTLs since 1960. UCLA has a data base of teaching materials <www.lmp.ucla.edu/cdrom.htm>

5. Several scholars of psychology (Susan Curtiss - UCLA) and foreign language education (Nancy Rhodes - CAL; Gladys Lipton - National FLES Institute; Marcia Rosenbusch - NFLRC/K12) have indicated that children actually do learn foreign languages more efficiently and effectively at an early age.

6. Imams from mosques in Washington, DC, Falls Church, VA, Chicago, IL, and Jonesboro, AR confirmed this phenomenon.

7. Funding organizations include: U.S. Department of Education (USED/Center for International Education), U.S. Information Agency (USIA), U.S. Department of Defense (National Security Education Program), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Mellon and Spencer Foundations. The National Foreign Language Resource Center at San Diego State University offers regional and national seminars concerning culture and ethnographic materials for the curricula. In addition, the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) provide regional seminars during the summer. The Ohio State University instructors of Arabic co-hosted the 1996 seminar.

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Appendix A

Class Time for Acquisition by Language Difficulty[1]

Intermediate rating - 1 (Minimal Proficiency)
Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Can ask and answer questions on very familiar topics. Errors in pronunciation and grammar are frequent. Speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but elementary needs. Can be understood by "native" speaker used to dealing with foreign speakers.

Advanced rating - 2 (Limited Working Proficiency)
Can narrate and describe in the past, present, and future. Can sustain long discourses. Uses circumlocutions. Speech and writing in paragraphs. Discussion on concrete topics. (biographies, life, work, feelings, current events) Ability to live off economy necessary for work or research. Able to deal with complex survival issues. Great sensitivity with the culture and sociolinguistic competence. Capable of translation and paraphrasing. Errors comprehensible to "natives" NOT used to dealing with foreigner.

Superior rating - 3 (Professional Proficiency)
Can handle unknown topics and situations, give opinions, hypothesize, give explanations, and detailed descriptions. Errors rarely interfere with comprehension or disturb educated "native" speaker. Strategic and discourse competency high. Sociolinguistic competency (register shifts) is still evolving.

	MOST DIFFICULT LANGUAGE (IV)	
Arabic	Intermediate Proficiency	480 hours
(Japanese,	Intermediate High Proficiency	720 hours
Chinese, Korean)	Advanced Proficiency	1320 hours
	Superior Proficiency	2600 hours

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[1]Classification recommended by Foreign Service Institute, Defense Language Institute, the Inter-Agency Language Roundtable, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, and the Educational Testing Services.

MOST DIFFICULT LANGUAGE (1320 Hrs)
Sample Case 1992-96[2]

University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin (USA)

I	First year - 321, 322 Arabic	
	60 min. x 5 days/wk x 15 wks x 2 sem.	= 150 hrs.
	50 min. x 2 days/wk x 15 wks x 2 sem.	= 50 hrs.
II	Second year - 323, 324 Arabic	
	50 min. x 5 days/wk x 15 wks x 2 sem.	= 125 hrs.
	50 min. x 2 days/wk x 15 wks x 2 sem.	= 50 hrs.
III	Third year - 445, 446 Arabic Reading	
	50 min. x 5 days/wk x 15 wks x 2 sem.	= 125 hrs.
Total UW		**500 hours**

Yemen Language Center
Sana'a, Yemen

I	Beginning - 101, 102, 103 Arabic	
	200 min. x 5 days/wk x 10 wks x 3 qts	= 500 hrs.
II	Intermediate - 204, 205 Arabic	
	200 min. x 5 days/wk x 10 wks x 2 qts.	= 333 hrs.
III	Advanced - 306, 307 Arabic	
	100 min. x 5 days/wk x 10 wks x 2 qts.	= 167 hrs.
Total YLC		**1000 hours**

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[2]Course information was obtained from the institution, department, course timetable, college bulletin, or department brochure.

Appendix B

BELIEFS ABOUT FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING
(KRI Survey)

Use a #2 pencil and respond to the following statements in the boxes marked "Special Codes" by darkening the appropriate response circle on the answer sheet.

C. What is your sex:
0 = Male 1 = Female

D. What is your age by years? age in years:
0 = 17/younger 1 = 18-22 2 = 23-25 3 = 26 or older

E. Have you ever studied ARABIC formally?
0 = NO 1 = YES

F. Have you ever studied any other foreign language before?
0 = NO 1 = YES

G. What is your first (mother) language?
0 = Arabic 1 = English 2 = French 3 = German
4 = Japanese 5 = Russian 6 = Spanish 9 = Other

I. What is the discipline of your highest degree?
0 = agriculture 1 = anthropology 2 = education
3 = ESL 4 = lang/lit. 5 = pol. science
6 = sociology 7 = medicine 8 = music
9 = other

LEARNERS' BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

For statements 1-3, read the following statements and mark your answer sheet with the one letter which corresponds most closely to your assessment of each statement.

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Neutral (D) Disagree
(E) Strongly disagree

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn a foreign language.
2. Some people are born with a special ability which helps them learn a foreign language.
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.

***

4. The language I am trying to learn is:
   A = Very difficult
   B = Difficult
   C = Medium difficulty
   D = Easy
   E = Very Easy

For statements 5-13, read the following statements and mark your answer sheet with the one letter which corresponds most closely to your assessment of each statement.

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Neutral (D) Disagree
(E) Strongly disagree

5. The language I am trying to learn is structured in the same way as English.
6. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.
7. It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.
8. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.
9. You should not say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.
10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.
11. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.
12. If I heard someone speaking the language I am trying to learn, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.
13. It is okay to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.

***

14. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?
    A = less than a year
    B = 1-2 years
    C = 3-5 years
    D = 5-10 years
    E = you can't learn a language in 1 hour a day

For statements 15-46, read the following statements and mark your answer sheet with the one letter which corresponds most closely to your assessment of each statement.

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) Neutral (D) Disagree (E) Strongly disagree

15. I have a foreign language aptitude.
16. Learning a foreign language mostly a matter of learning many new vocabulary words.
17. It is important to repeat and practice often.
18. I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.
19. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.
20. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a many of grammar rules.
21. It is important to practice in the language laboratory.
22. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.
23. If I speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.
24. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.
25. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.
26. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.
27. If I learn to speak this language very well it will help me get a good job.
28. It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.
29. People who are good a t math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.
30. People from my country think that it is important to speak a foreign language.
31. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.
32. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.
33. People from my country are good a learning foreign languages.
34. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.
35. In order to read something in a foreign language, you have to know all the words.

36. In order to listen to something in a foreign language, you have to know all the words.
37. It is easier to read and understand (listen) in this language than it is to speak and write in it.

***

I am interested in studying this language....
38. because I have distant ancestors who spoke this language.
39. because it will be helpful to me professionally.
40. because I am interested in the culture of the people(s) who speak this language.
41. because I am interested in the politics and/or economic systems of the country (countries) where this language is spoken.
42. because I need to fulfill a foreign language requirement for graduation.
43. to qualify for a fellowship or some kind of funding for my education.
44. because I have friends or relatives who speak it.
45. because the quality of instruction in this language is excellent.
46. because I plan to travel to a country where this language is spoken.

***

For statement 47, use the scale provided. Mark the letter which corresponds most closely to your assessment.

47. My MOST important goal in studying this language is to develop the ability to:
    A = read and write (not speak)
    B = participate in short, simple conversations of an informal nature
    C = participate in more formal discussions
    D = function as a native speaker or interpreter
    E = understand the culture of the people who speak this language

Appendix C

ARABIC

Enrollments for the
Yemen Language Center,
Wisconsin, and African Studies Centers

Institutions	1960	1961	1968	1970	1974	1977	1980	1983	1986	1990	1995
Yemen Lang. Center										20?	40
Univ. of Wisconsin			36		28	32	39	32	41	40	40
% MLA Enrollment			0.3%		0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Totals-ASC T6 (12)		226	287		317	465	561	518	533	577	691
ASC T6/MLA (8.3%)		33%	26%		17%	15%	16%	15%	16%	17%	16%
Totals-MLA (144)	541	693	1100	1333	1860	3070	3466	3436	3417	3475	4444

ASC = African Studies Centers (HEA Title VI-funded universities)
MLA = Modern Language Association

Brod, R.I. (1988). Foreign language enrollments in US institutions of higher education - Fall 1986. ADFL Bulletin, 19/2: 39-44.
Brod, R.I. & Huber, B.J. (1995). Foreign language enrollments in United States institutions of higher education, Fall 1995. ADFL Bulletin, 28/2: 55-61.

Appendix D

Majority Responses

Table 1 Majority Responses for Arabic at Wisconsin for 1992/93

	Statement	Choice	n	%	Mean	SD
17.	It is important to repeat & practice	strongly agree	24	58.5	1.41	.50
25.	Learning a FL is differs from other subjects	agree	25	61.0	2.02	.69
3.	Some FLs are easier to learn than others	agree	24	58.5	1.90	.80
4.	This language is difficult to learn	agree	24	58.5	2.02	.65
13.	Guessing is OK	agree	24	58.5	2.27	.81
34.	Everyone can learn to speak a FL	agree	22	61.1	2.00	.76
11.	Better to learn FL in country	agree	21	51.2	1.83	.74
31.	Learning a FL to know its speakers better	agree	20	55.6	2.17	.88
45.	The quality of instruction is excellent	neutral	21	58.3	2.50	.65
9.	Do not speak FL until correct	disagree	28	68.3	4.22	.52
35.	To read in a FL, must know all the words	disagree	26	72.2	3.89	.52
26.	Learning a FL is translating from English	disagree	23	56.1	4.17	.70
5.	This FL is structured the same as English	disagree	22	53.7	4.12	.78
36.	To listen in FL, must know all the words	disagree	22	61.1	3.88	.52

N=41, K=2

Table 2 Majority Responses for Arabic at Wisconsin in 1992

	Statement	Choice	n	%	Mean	SD
23.	**Speaking well will bring many opportunities**	**strongly agree**	**10**	**58.8**		
17.	It is important to repeat and practice	strongly agree	9	52.9		
46.	**Plan to travel to country where FL spoken**	**strongly agree**	**7**	**53.8**		
47.	**Most important goal for studying FL**	**strongly agree**	**7**	**53.8**		
13.	**Guessing is OK**	**agree**	**12**	**70.6**		
4.	**This language is difficult to learn**	**agree**	**12**	**70.6**		
34.	Everyone can learn to speak a FL	agree	9	69.2		
25.	Learning a FL differs from other subjects	agree	11	64.7		
15.	**I have a FL aptitude**	**agree**	**10**	**58.8**		
2.	**Some people are born with FL ability**	**agree**	**10**	**58.8**		
6.	**I will learn to speak this FL well**	**agree**	**9**	**52.9**		
27.	**Speaking well will get a good job**	**agree**	**8**	**61.5**		
31.	Learning a FL to know FL speakers better	agree	7	53.8		
41.	**Interested in econ./pol. of the FL country**	**agree**	**7**	**53.8**		
18.	**I am nervous speaking the FL**	**neutral**	**9**	**52.9**		
45.	The quality of instruction is excellent	neutral	7	53.8		
9.	Do not speak FL until correct	disagree	13	76.5		
26.	**Learning a FL is translating from English**	**disagree**	**11**	**64.7**		
35.	To read in a FL, must know all the words	disagree	10	76.9		
33.	Americans are good FL learners	disagree	9	69.2		
36.	To listen in FL, must know all the words	disagree	9	69.2		
5.	This FL is structured the same as English	disagree	9	55.9		
30.	**Americans think FL is important to speak**	**disagree**	**7**	**53.8**		

n=16 **Bold** = response unique to this sub-set of Wisconsin students of Arabic

Table 3 Majority Responses for Arabic at Wisconsin in 1993

	Statement	Choice	n	%	Mean	SD
17.	It is important to repeat and practice	strongly agree	16	64.0		
3.	**Some FLs are easier to learn than others**	**agree**	**16**	**64.0**		
31.	Learning a FL to know its speakers better	agree	14	58.3		
25.	Learning a FL differs from other subjects	agree	14	56.0		
34.	Everyone can learn to speak a FL	agree	13	54.2		
11.	**Better to learn FL in country**	**agree**	**13**	**52.0**		
45.	The quality of instruction is excellent	neutral	15	62.5		
22.	**Women are better FL learners than men**	**neutral**	**13**	**52.0**		
35.	To read in a FL, must know all the words	disagree	16	66.7		
9.	Do not speak FL until correct	disagree	16	64.0		
5.	This FL is structured the same as English	disagree	14	56.0		
33.	Americans are good FL learners	disagree	13	54.2		
36.	To listen in FL, must know all the words	disagree	13	54.2		
16.	**Learning a FL is learning vocabulary**	**disagree**	**13**	**52.0**		

n=25 **Bold** = response unique to this sub-set of Wisconsin students of Arabic

Table 4 Significant Statements for Arabic at Wisconsin (Kruskal-Wallis)[3]

Year	1992	1993
Sample Size	n=16	n=25
	AGREE	
6. I will learn to speak this FL well	14.26	25.77
12. Would speak FL to native speaker	16.15	24.44
23. Speaking well will bring opportunities	16.68	24.06

$p < 0.05$ * = 0.001

[3]The sample size is less than 30 indicating that a non-parametric test may have stronger power than a parametric one. As the sample size decreases, the possibility of the statistical analysis to indicate a "false positive" (i.e., a result that is statistically significant when it is not) result increases. Consequently, these results show only trends and are not conclusive.

Yemen Language Center 1996

Table 5 Majority Responses for Arabic at the YLC 1996

	Statement	Choice	n	%	Mean	SD
11.	Better to learn FL in country	strongly agree	20	74.1	1.26	.45
17.	It is important to repeat and practice	strongly agree	16	59.3	1.41	.50
40.	Interested in culture of the FL people	strongly agree	16	59.3	1.44	.58
1.	Children learn a FL easier than adults	strongly agree	16	59.3	1.48	.07
46.	Plan to travel to country where FL spoken	strongly agree	15	55.6	1.67	1.00
6.	I will learn to speak this FL well	agree	16	59.3	2.04	.65
25.	Learning a FL differs from other subjects	agree	16	59.3	2.04	.98
31.	Learning a FL to know its speakers better	agree	15	55.6	1.78	.64
12.	If heard language, would speak it	agree	14	51.9	1.96	.71
23.	Speaking well will bring opportunities	agree	14	51.9	2.15	.91
36.	To listen in FL, must know all the words	disagree	16	59.3	4.33	.55
35.	To read in a FL, must know all the words	disagree	15	57.7	4.23	.71
20.	Learning FL is learning grammar	disagree	16	61.5	3.85	.61
9.	Do not speak FL until correct	disagree	18	69.2	4.69	.47
38.	Distant ancestors knew this FL	strongly disagree	20	74.1	4.81	1.12
42.	FL requirement for graduation	strongly disagree	15	60.0	4.20	1.26
43.	FL necessary for fellowship	strongly disagree	14	53.8	4.08	1.23

N=27